

THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



Oct. 18, 2012
Vol. 177, No. 41

Reporting. Connecting. Inspiring.

Toll free 1-800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

INSIDE



Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference to focus on encouragement

◆ Page 3



Compare party platforms on selected moral, ethical issues

◆ Pages 4-8



Harvest Evangelism celebrates 'what God still does'

◆ Page 10

Religious affiliation trends in 2012



RNS photo

Poll shows 'nones' growing, Protestantism declining

The number of Americans who say they have no religious affiliation has hit an all-time high — about one in five American adults — according to a study released Oct. 9 by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Labeled "nones" because they claim either no religious preference or no religion at all, their ranks have hit 46 million people. Many of them are young people — one in three U.S. adults under 30 are now considered "nones."

The report also found that the number of self-described atheists and agnostics has hit a peak — 13 million people, or 6 percent of the U.S. population. The number has risen 2 percentage points over five years.

And while the "nones" are growing Protestantism is on the decline, shrinking from 62 percent of the religiously affiliated in 1972 to 51 percent in 2010. The number of U.S. Catholics held steady at about 25 percent.

Still, claiming no religious identity does not mean an absence of religious beliefs, the report found.

The majority of "nones" — 68 percent, including some who say they are atheists — say they believe in

God or some form of higher being. Half say they feel "a deep connection with nature," and 20 percent say they pray every day.

Why do the "nones" continue to grow? Greg Smith, a lead researcher on the study, attributed it to the natural replacement of older, more conservative generations with younger, more liberal ones, as well as a worldwide rise in secularism among developed nations.

Another interesting twist to the study's findings is how broad-based they are.

"The change is occurring among both men and women, those with college educations and those without, within several income levels and in all regions of the U.S.," said Cary Funk, another lead researcher on the study. "The growth does tend to be concentrated among whites, with no significant change with blacks and Hispanics." Geographically "nones" are most concentrated in the West and least concentrated in the South.

The survey was conducted by analyzing material gathered by several organizations from 120,000 respondents between 2007 and 2012 and also from the General Social Survey, which has data dating to 1972. (RNS)

Do not panic amid rise of 'nones,' Baptist leaders say

Headlines proclaiming the loss of the Protestant majority in the United States should not cause panic among evangelicals but should motivate them to articulate the gospel and

live as followers of Christ, Southern Baptist leaders say.

The percentage of Americans who are not affiliated with any particular religion — dubbed the "nones" — rose to 20 percent in the latest analysis by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, compared to 15 percent five years ago.

Moreover, one-third of Americans under age 30 are religiously unaffiliated, Pew said Oct. 9, and the percentage of Americans who self-identify as Protestants dropped from 53 percent to 48 percent.

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, said the report underscores the need for Southern Baptists to plant healthy churches.

"I believe that only a church planting movement will reverse this trend and that is why our Send North America strategy is an all-out effort to help Southern Baptists move in that direction," Ezell said, referring to an emphasis on church planting in metropolitan areas.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay (See 'Baptist,' page 9)

Forest Park volunteer helps Mixtec family

By Hannah Henderson
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Three years ago Donna McCullough, center director of Forest Park Ministry Center in Montgomery, was introduced to a family in a nearby neighborhood. The family was of Mixtec descent, a Native American race from the mountainous regions of southern Mexico and Guatemala. They are one of many such families living in the Montgomery area. They were experiencing difficulty in school because neither the parents nor the children possessed English reading or writing skills, leaving them unable to understand forms and homework sent from school.

It presented an excellent ministry opportunity for Forest Park, an outreach of Montgomery Baptist Association that provides material help and shares the gospel message with the poor.

Community missions

"The director and volunteers at Forest Park provide compassion and care to every guest who comes through the doors of the center," said Lisa Rose, Montgomery Association director of church and community missions. "It is a vital part of the transformation of that community."

The volunteers began teaching conversational English to a small group of Mixtec women.

McCullough noted on the ministry center's blog that participation of many of the women in the class was sporadic, "as their duties at home took precedence over any outside activities."

But Joselina and her three youngest children were different. They attended faithfully. "Their two older siblings were learning English in school, but these children, especially 5-year-old Omar, knew only the Mixtec heard at home and were ill- (See 'Go,' page 13)

COMMENT

Is There a Lesson To Be Learned from Our History?

In the past month I had the privilege of participating in the 184th anniversary of Gilgal Baptist Church near Tuscaloosa and the 190th anniversary of Siloam Baptist Church, Marion. Preparing for these events caused me to revisit the early days of Alabama Baptist history and reading that history raised the question about learning from our past lest we repeat the mistakes of our forefathers.

The Alabama Territory opened to settlement after a treaty with the Chickasaw Indians in 1805. The treaty stipulated that territory ceded by the Chickasaws would not be opened for settlement for three years; but like many promises made to Native Americans, it was quickly broken. John Nicholson is noted as the first Baptist preacher in the Alabama territory and by 1808 there were enough Baptists living north of the Tennessee River to organize the first Baptist church on Alabama soil — Flint River Primitive Baptist Church, founded Oct. 2, 1808.

The next year, Enon Baptist Church was founded. This church later became First Baptist Church, Huntsville, and is the oldest Baptist church in continuous existence in the state.

Baptists grew quickly. By the time Alabama became a state — 1819 — history reports 60 Baptist ministers living and working here. When the Alabama Baptist State Convention was organized in 1823, there were 128 Baptist churches in the state with more than 5,000 members from a total population of 127,000.

The rapid growth of Baptists reflected the vibrant religious life along the nation's western frontier at the time. The Second Great Awakening was in full force in the 1810s and 1820s. Camp meetings drew hundreds, sometimes thousands, of participants and regularly lasted a week or more. The famous Cane Ridge Camp Meeting in Kentucky reportedly drew more than 20,000 people. In Alabama the Canaan Camp Meeting in Jefferson County saw more than 500 people baptized.

Inspiring results

Camp meetings were the social events of the year for hardworking settlers. They were also great revival meetings. Led primarily by Methodist circuit-riding preachers and Baptist farmer-preachers, the gospel was proclaimed day and night as preachers took turns calling people to salvation and to regenerated living. The preaching was emotional, the music lively and the results inspiring.

Studies show rapid growth for Methodist and



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

Baptist churches during these years as people responded to the message that “whosoever will may come.”

Along the seacoast of the United States other momentous events were taking place in Baptist life. On Feb. 19, 1812, Adoniram and Ann Judson sailed from Boston as America's first Protestant missionaries. As every Baptist should know, their Bible study during the voyage to India convinced them of the Baptist understanding of the Scriptures. Luther Rice, who sailed with the Judsons, decided to return to America to rally support for missions efforts while the Judsons moved to Burma to plant the gospel.

The result was the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions founded in 1814. The body is more commonly known as the Triennial Convention because it met every three years. From the Triennial Convention came the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society along with societies for domestic missions, Bible publishing and distribution, and seminary education.

Baptist work was thriving during the 1820s but that soon came to an end.

By the early 1830s what historians call the “Anti-Missionary Movement” was in full swing. Protests arose over the style of the religious experiences typical of the Second Great Awakening. Frontier religion had too much zeal, too much enthusiasm for the more staid older churches along the Southern Atlantic coast. Objections arose to many of the preachers being self-taught rather than having been disciplined by approved ministers. Theology became a major division. The anti-missionary voices objected to the “whosoever will” theology preached by the emerging evangelical wings of major denominations. Instead the more critical voices advocated a more Calvinistic theology

that only God determined who would be saved.

With this theology, it is not surprising that strong protests were raised to foreign and domestic missions. Mission societies across the nation disbanded under anti-missionary pressures. Furthermore, critics argued, societies and conventions were contrary to biblical teaching, which emphasized the local church.

Historians point out Baptists and other Protestant Christians in the Northeast and West generally embraced “whosoever will” theology. It was the established churches of the South that held to the more Calvinistic theology. Also Baptists, one of the two denominations that benefited most from the evangelical approach to Christianity, played a key role in bringing the Second Great Awakening to an end, historians say.

In 1837 Alabama Baptists voted to survey the then 21 associations in the state to determine their stands on missions. The report said four associations supported missions, four associations opposed missions and the other 13 were divided on the topic.

Historians write that by the end of the 1840s the Second Great Awakening in the United States had come to a close.

Reaching the lost

It is interesting that missions-minded Baptists persevered in their commitment to reaching a lost world with the gospel, as they formed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 despite the growing oppositions to missions and evangelism of the time.

Following the Civil War another burst of religious activism broke out featuring such evangelists as Charles Finney and Dwight L. Moody. Again the theology was “whosoever will” and featured intense social activism by evangelical Christians. Some historians call this time a Third Great Awakening resulting in the expectation that the 20th century would be the “Christian century.”

The period between the end of World War II and the mid-1970s is called by some as a “Fourth Great Awakening.” It featured the rapid growth of evangelical and charismatic denominations including Southern Baptists. Scholars point to religious conflict as a major reason the rapid growth of evangelical Christianity slowed in the second, third and fourth awakenings.

The issues of 200 years ago sound as current as the last gathering of Baptists. Baptists and other Christians still argue over style of worship, over evangelism and missions, over theology, over the role of the ministry, over Baptists working together through conventions and associations or working through the local church. In these arguments one cannot help but hear the echoes of history.

“It is interesting that missions-minded Baptists persevered in their commitment to reaching a lost world with the gospel, as they formed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.”



"If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

(ISSN 0738-7741;
USPS 011-080)

© The Alabama Baptist, Inc. is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 1-800-803-5201. Fax: 205-870-8957. Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org. Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or circulation@thealabamabaptist.org. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, Ala., and other locations.

PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$13
Individual — \$20.95

ONLINE
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Church Budget — \$8.50
Individual — \$14.95

DR. BOBBY S. TERRY
EDITOR

Jennifer Davis Rash
Executive Editor

Neisha Fuson
Editorial Assistant
for Online Communications

Julie Payne
News Writer

Lauren C. Grim
Designer

Wanda Bergeron
Local Editions Coordinator

Linda Harrison
Financial Administrator

Bill Gilmore
Advertising Director

Debbie Campbell
Director of Circulation
and Public Relations

NEWS SERVICES
Baptist Press (BP), Associated Baptist Press (ABP), Religion News Service (RNS), Compass Direct News (CDN), Evangelical Press (EP), Forum 18 (F18).

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Circulation Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

**'Nation's top
Christian newspaper'**

as judged by
*Evangelical Press Association &
Religion Communicators Council*

'Practical, Personal, Powerful'

Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference to focus on encouragement

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Prayer, praise and encouragement will be the focus when Alabama Baptist pastors meet for their annual pastors conference Nov. 12.

"I look forward to this time every year as a time of fellowship with my co-laborers in Christ, and this year's conference promises to be a time of encouragement for Alabama Baptist pastors," said Michael "Mike" Cassity, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, in Montgomery Baptist Association, and president of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

The theme of this year's conference is "Our God Is ... Practical, Personal, Powerful," which highlights three aspects of God's character that are important to the work pastors do day in and day out, Cassity said.

"We know that our God is practical, which means that He is with us in our day-to-day ministry, from the mundane to the miraculous. Likewise God is personal. He strengthens us and leads us, both in our ministry and in our homes. Finally God is powerful. He is able to do far and above what we are able to do on our own," Cassity said.

This year's schedule includes speakers from Alabama Baptist churches and from Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) life. What they all have in common, Cassity said, is a heart for pastors.

"The Scripture we chose for this year's conference is 2 Timothy 1:7, which says that 'God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' Each of these speakers has something to say about the importance of our call as ministers of the gospel," Cassity said.

Sammy Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said the Pastors Conference is different from most conferences because of its emphasis solely on inspiration and fellowship for pastors.

"There are other conferences that are for information or instruction, and that is fine," Gilbreath said. "But I encourage pastors to attend the Pastors Conference, if for no other reason than for the time of refreshing they can receive."

The Pastors Conference will be held at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, Montgomery, in conjunction with the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting. The one-day conference is divided into three sessions, all of which will include both speakers and praise and worship music.

Phil Waldrep, speaker, author and founder of Phil Waldrep Min-

2012 PASTORS CONFERENCE PERSONALITIES

 WALDREP	 KNIGHT	 WOLF	 GILBREATH
 MCLEMORE	 MERRITT	 DOOLEY	 RAINER

PASTORS CONFERENCE PROGRAM

<p>Morning Session 8:30 a.m.—noon</p> <p>8:30 Continental breakfast 8:50 Pre-session music 9:00 Welcome/Prayer: Michael Cassity 9:03 Praise and worship 9:20 <i>Message:</i> Phil Waldrep 10:00 Praise and worship 10:20 <i>Message:</i> Teman Knight 11:00 Praise and worship 11:15 Prayer: Cliff Stever 11:20 <i>Message:</i> Jay Wolf 12:00 Lunch</p>	<p>Afternoon Session 1:20—4:30 p.m.</p> <p>1:20 Pre-session music 1:30 Praise and worship 1:40 Welcome/Election of officers: Michael Cassity 1:50 Prayer: Darrell Paulk 1:55 <i>Message:</i> Sammy Gilbreath 2:30 Praise and worship 2:45 Prayer: Dean Finch 2:50 <i>Message:</i> Dusty McLemore 3:30 Praise and worship 3:45 Prayer: Daniel Gillenwater 3:50 <i>Message:</i> James Merritt 4:30 Dinner</p>	<p>Evening Session 6:20—9 p.m.</p> <p>6:20 Pre-session music 6:30 Welcome: Michael Cassity 6:35 Special music 6:45 Praise and worship 7:00 Prayer: Tom Smith 7:05 <i>Message:</i> Adam Dooley 7:45 Recognition of host church/music leader, etc. 7:55 Special music 8:05 Praise and worship 8:20 Prayer: Geoff Henson 8:25 <i>Message:</i> Thom S. Rainer 9:00 Closing prayer</p>
--	---	---

istries, headquartered in Trinity, will lead off the speakers during the morning session. Two Montgomery-area pastors, Teman Knight, of Heritage Baptist Church, and Jay Wolf, of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, will speak during the morning session as well.

Afternoon messages

The afternoon session will feature messages by Gilbreath and Dusty McLemore, pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, Athens. James Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga., and president of the SBC from 2000–2002, will conclude the afternoon session. Merritt is a well-known voice of the Christian faith and is the author of several books, including "How to Impact and Influence Others," "God, I've Got a Question" and "Still Stand-

ing: 8 Winning Strategies for Facing Tough Times."

Adam Dooley, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, will be first to speak during the evening session. The conference will close with a message from Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Rainer is the author of 22 books, including "Simple Life," "Simple Church" and "Essential Church." His latest book is "The Millennials" co-authored with his son, Jess Rainer.

Throughout the day several Alabama Baptists will take part in the conference by leading congregants in prayer, including: Cliff Stever, pastor of Yarbrough Street Baptist Church, Montgomery; Darrell Paulk, pastor of Hayneville Baptist Church, Hayneville; Dean Finch, minister of education at Taylor Road Baptist Church,

Montgomery; Daniel Gillenwater, pastor of Eastern Oaks Baptist Church, Montgomery; Tom Smith, youth pastor at Ridgecrest Baptist Church; and Geoff Henson, missions leader and evangelist at First Baptist Church, Montgomery.

Cassity hopes pastors who have never attended the Pastors Conference will come this year and see the benefits of spending time with other pastors in prayer and fellowship.

Strengthen each other

"This is a time when we can meet fellow pastors, pray for them and strengthen one another in the Lord," Cassity said.

Gilbreath agreed. "Pastors give and give and do not have the opportunity to receive many times," he said. "This is one of those times to just receive." ❧

Party Platforms

Every election cycle the nation's leading political parties outline their respective visions for America through their party platforms. Following are excerpts on selected moral and ethical issues taken directly from the Democratic platform called "Moving America Forward" and the Republican platform titled "We Believe in America." The information is provided to help readers compare the positions of each party on these important issues so readers will be better informed when they cast their ballots Nov. 6.

Election Day is Nov. 6.



Barack Obama

Democrat

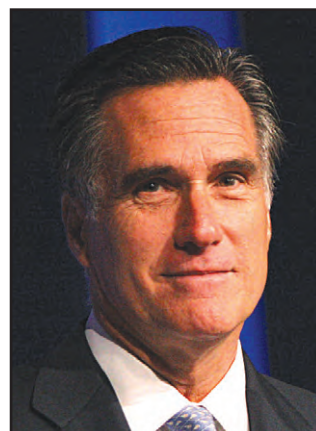
We believe accessible, affordable, high-quality health care is part of the American promise, that Americans should have the security that comes with good health care and that no one should go broke because they get sick.

Soon working families will finally have the security of knowing they won't lose health care or be forced into bankruptcy if a family member gets sick or loses their job. And soon insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions. Medicaid will cover more working families. Those who don't get insurance at work will be able to shop in new exchanges and will be eligible for new tax credits. As a result, all Americans will have access to health care.

We refuse to go back to the days when health insurance companies had unchecked

power to cancel your health policy, deny you coverage or charge women more than men.

We remain committed to eliminating disparities in health and will continue to make sure families have access to mental health and substance abuse services. We will strengthen Medicaid and oppose efforts to block grant the program, slash its funding and leave millions more without health insurance. We will continue to invest in our public health infrastructure — ensuring that we are able to respond to emergencies and support community-based efforts to prevent disease. The Recovery Act and the health reform law made historic investments in Community Health Centers, and Democrats will continue to support these valuable institutions.



Mitt Romney

Republican

Congressional Republicans are committed to repealing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act — Obamacare; and a Republican president, on the first day in office, will use his legitimate waiver authority under that law to halt its progress and then will sign its repeal.

Then the American people, through the free market, can advance affordable and responsible health care reform that meets the needs and concerns of patients and providers. We believe that taking care of one's health is an individual responsibility. Chronic diseases, many of them related to lifestyle, drive health care costs, accounting for more than 75 percent of the nation's

medical spending. To reduce demand and thereby lower costs, we must foster personal responsibility while increasing preventive services to promote healthy lifestyles. We believe that all Americans should have improved access to affordable, coordinated, quality health care, including individuals struggling with mental illness. Our goal is to encourage the development of a health care system that provides higher quality care at a lower cost to all Americans while protecting the patient-physician relationship based on mutual trust, informed consent and privileged patient confidentiality.

To return the states to their proper role of regulating local insurance markets and caring for the needy, we propose to block grant Medicaid and other payments to the states.

Health Care

Democrat

We believe every American deserves a secure, healthy and dignified retirement. America's seniors have earned their Social Security through a lifetime of hard work and personal responsibility. President Obama is committed to preserving that promise for this and future generations.

During their working years Americans contribute to Social Security in exchange for a promise that they will receive an income in retirement. Unlike those in the other party, we will find a solution to protect Social Security for future generations. We will block Repub-

lican efforts to subject Americans' guaranteed retirement income to the whims of the stock market through privatization. We reject approaches that insist that cutting benefits is the only answer. President Obama will also make it easier for Americans to save on their own for retirement and prepare for unforeseen expenses by participating in retirement accounts at work.

Social Security

Democrats believe that Social Security and Medicare must be kept strong for seniors, people with disabilities and future generations. Democrats adamantly oppose any efforts to privatize or voucherize Medicare; unlike our opponents we will not ask seniors to pay thousands of dollars more every year while they watch the value of their Medicare benefits evaporate. Democrats believe that Medicare is a sacred compact with our seniors. Nearly 50 million older Americans and Americans with disabilities rely on Medicare each year, and the new health care law makes Medicare stronger by adding new benefits, fighting fraud and improving care for patients. And,

over 10 years, the law will save the average Medicare beneficiary \$4,200. President Obama is already leading the most successful crackdown on health care fraud ever, having already recovered \$10 billion from health care scams. We will build on those reforms, not eliminate Medicare's guarantees. The health care law is closing the gap in prescription drug coverage known as the "doughnut hole." More than five million seniors have already saved money — an average of \$600 last year — and the "doughnut hole" will be closed for good by 2020.

Medicare

Democrats are strongly committed to enacting comprehensive immigration reform that supports our economic goals and reflects our values as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. Our prosperity depends on an immigration system that reflects our values and meets America's needs. But Americans know that today our immigration system is badly broken — separating families, undermining honest employers and workers, burdening law enforcement and leaving millions of people working and living in the shadows. The country urgently needs comprehensive immigration reform that brings undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and requires them to get right with the law, learn English and pay taxes in order to get on a path to earn citizenship. We need an immigration reform that creates a system for allocating visas that meets our economic needs, keeps families together and enforces the law. Today the southwest border is more secure than at any time in the past 20 years. Unlawful crossings are at a

40-year low, and the Border Patrol is better staffed than at any time in its history. We are continuing to work to hold employers accountable for whom they hire. The Department of Homeland Security is prioritizing the deportation of criminals who endanger our communities over the deportation of immigrants who do not pose a threat, such as children who came here through no fault of their own and are pursuing an education. President Obama's administration has streamlined the process of legal immigration for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, supporting family reunification as a priority, and has enhanced opportunities for English-language learning and immigrant integration. When states sought to interfere with federal immigration law by passing local measures targeting immigrants, this administration challenged them in court.

Immigration

Public education is one of our critical democratic institutions. We are committed to ensuring that every child in America has access to a world-class public education so we can out-educate the world and make sure America has the world's highest proportion of college graduates by 2020. This requires excellence at every level of our education system, from early learning through post-secondary education. It means we must close the achievement gap in America's schools and ensure that in every neighborhood in the country, children can benefit from high-quality educational opportunities. Democrats are committed to working with states and communities so they have the flexibility and resources they need to improve elementary and secondary education in a way that works best for

students. The Democratic Party understands the importance of turning around struggling public schools. We will continue to strengthen all our schools and work to expand public school options for low-income youth, including magnet schools, charter schools, teacher-led schools and career academies. We Democrats honor our nation's teachers, who do a heroic job for their students every day. We also believe in carefully crafted evaluation systems that give struggling teachers a chance to succeed and protect due process if another teacher has to be put in the classroom. We also recognize there is no substitute for a parent's involvement in their child's education.

Education

Republican

While no changes should adversely affect any current or near-retiree, comprehensive reform should address our society's remarkable medical advances in longevity and allow younger workers the option of creating their own personal investment accounts as supplements to the system. Younger Americans have lost all faith in the Social Security system, which is understandable when they read the non-

partisan actuary's reports about its future funding status. Born in an old industrial era beyond the memory of most Americans, it is long overdue for major change, not just another legislative stopgap that postpones a day of reckoning. To restore public trust in the system, Republicans are committed to setting it on a sound fiscal basis that will give workers control over, and a sound return on, their investments. The sooner we act, the sooner those close to retirement can be reassured of their benefits and younger workers can take responsibility for planning their own retirement decades from now.

The Republican Party is committed to saving Medicare and Medicaid. Unless the programs' fiscal ship is righted, the individuals hurt first and the worst will be those who depend on them the most. We will save Medicare by modernizing it, by empowering its participants and by putting it on a secure financial footing. This will be an enormous undertaking, and it should be a nonpartisan one. We welcome to the effort all who sincerely want to ensure the future for our seniors and the poor.

Despite the enormous differences between Medicare and Medicaid, the two programs share the same fiscal outlook: their current courses cannot be sustained. The first step is to move the two programs away from their current unsustainable defined-benefit entitlement model to a fiscally sound defined contribution model. This is the only way to limit costs, restore consumer choice for patients and introduce competition; for in health care, as in any other sector of the economy, genuine competition is the best guarantee of better care at lower cost.

Our highest priority is to secure the rule of law both at our borders and at ports of entry. In this country the rule of law guarantees equal treatment to every individual, including more than 1 million immigrants to whom we grant permanent residence every year. That is why we oppose any form of amnesty for those who, by intentionally violating the law, disadvantage those who have obeyed it. We support the mandatory use of the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (S.A.V.E.) program prior to the granting of any state or federal government entitlements or IRS refunds. We insist upon enforcement at the workplace through verification systems so that jobs can be available to all legal workers. When Americans need jobs, it is absolutely essential that we protect them from illegal labor in the workplace. That is why we support Republican legislation to give the Department of Homeland Security long-

term detention authority to keep dangerous but undeportable aliens off our streets, expedite expulsion of criminal aliens and make gang membership a deportable offense. We will create humane procedures to encourage illegal aliens to return home voluntarily while enforcing the law against those who overstay their visas. State efforts to reduce illegal immigration must be encouraged, not attacked. The pending Department of Justice lawsuits against Arizona, Alabama, South Carolina and Utah must be dismissed immediately. The double-layered fencing on the border that was enacted by Congress in 2006 but never completed must finally be built. In order to restore the rule of law, federal funding should be denied to sanctuary cities that violate federal law and endanger their own citizens, and federal funding should be denied to universities that provide in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens in open defiance of federal law. While we encourage the retention and transmission of heritage tongues, we support English as the nation's official language.

We support options for learning, including home-schooling and local innovations like single-sex classes, full-day school hours and year-round schools. School choice — whether through charter schools, open enrollment requests, college lab schools, virtual schools, career and technical education programs, vouchers, or tax credits — is important for all children, especially for families with children trapped in failing schools. We support the promotion of local career and technical educational programs and entrepreneurial programs that have been supported by leaders in industry and will retrain and retool the

American workforce, which is the best in the world. We support its concept of block grants and the repeal of numerous federal regulations that interfere with state and local control of public schools. We support putting the needs of students before the special interests of unions when approaching elementary and secondary education reform. Because parents are a child's first teachers, we support family literacy programs, which improve the reading, language and life skills of both parents and children from low-income families. To ensure that all students have access to the mainstream of American life, we support the English First approach and oppose divisive programs that limit students' ability to advance in American society.

(continued on page 6)

Party Platforms

Democrat

Faith has always been a central part of the American story and a driving force of progress and justice throughout our history. We know that our nation, our communities and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. Faith-based organizations will always be critical allies in meeting the challenges that face our nation and our world — from domestic and global poverty to climate change and human trafficking. People of faith and religious organizations do amazing work in communi-



ties across this country and the world, and we believe in lifting up and valuing that good work and finding ways to support it where possible. We believe in constitutionally sound, evidence-based partnerships with faith-based and other nonprofit organizations to serve those in need and advance our shared interests. There is

no conflict between supporting faith-based institutions and respecting our Constitution, and a full commitment to both principles is essential for the continued flourishing of both faith and country.

Faith

Republican

The first provision of the First Amendment concerns freedom of religion. That assurance has never been more needed than it is today. The most offensive instance of this war on religion has been the current administration's attempt to compel faith-related institutions, as well as believing individuals, to contravene their deeply held religious, moral or ethical beliefs regarding health services, traditional marriage or abortion. We pledge to respect the religious beliefs and rights of conscience of all Americans and to safeguard the independence of their institutions from government. We support the public display of the Ten Commandments as a reflection of our history and of our country's Judeo-Christian

heritage and affirm the right of students to engage in prayer at events in public schools and to have equal access to public schools and other public facilities to accommodate religious freedom in the public square. We assert every citizen's right to apply religious values to public policy and the right of faith-based organizations to participate fully in public programs without renouncing their beliefs, removing religious symbols or submitting to government-imposed hiring practices. We oppose government discrimination against businesses due to religious views. We condemn the hate campaigns, threats of violence and vandalism by proponents of same-sex "marriage" against advocates of traditional marriage and call for a federal investigation into attempts to deny religious believers their civil rights.

We support the right of all families to have equal respect, responsibilities and protections under the law. We support marriage equality and support the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same-sex couples. We also support the freedom of churches and religious entities to decide how to administer marriage as a religious sacrament without government interference.

We oppose discriminatory federal and state constitutional amendments and other

attempts to deny equal protection of the laws to committed same-sex couples who seek the same respect and responsibilities as other married couples. We support the full repeal of the so-called Defense of Marriage Act and the passage of the Respect for Marriage Act.

Same-sex 'marriage'

A serious threat to our country's constitutional order is an activist judiciary. A blatant example has been the court-ordered redefinition of marriage in several states. This is more than a matter of warring legal concepts and ideals. It is an assault on the foundations of our society, challenging the institution which, for thousands of years in virtually every civilization, has been entrusted with the rearing of children and the transmission of cultural values. We reaffirm our support for a Constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. We applaud the citizens of

the majority of states that have enshrined in their constitutions the traditional concept of marriage, and we support the campaigns underway in several other states to do so. It has been proven by both experience and endless social science studies that traditional marriage is best for children. Children raised in intact married families are more likely to attend college, are physically and emotionally healthier, and are less likely to use drugs or alcohol, engage in crime or get pregnant outside of marriage. The success of marriage directly impacts the economic well-being of individuals. We recognize and honor the courageous efforts of those who bear the many burdens of parenting alone. We embrace the principle that all Americans should be treated with respect and dignity.

Too many Americans live without hope for a better future or access to good, family-supporting jobs. Fifteen percent of our fellow citizens live in poverty, and one in five families struggles with food insecurity. Many of these families work but are unable to pay the bills. The economic crisis has hit low-income American families particularly hard, but merely restoring our country to where it was before the economic crisis is not enough. We must make ending poverty a national priority. We must raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation. We will continue to fight for equal pay for equal work, a strong labor movement and access to a world-class education for every child. We understand that pov-

erty disproportionately affects communities of color and we are committed to working with those most affected by poverty. We will continue the improvements in refundable tax credits for low-income families to encourage work and education while lifting families out of poverty. To enhance access and equity in employment, education and business opportunities we encourage initiatives to remove barriers to equal opportunity that still exist in America. We will expand the Promise Neighborhoods Program to prepare more students for college.

Poverty

Welfare reforms enacted in 1996 changed the standard for policy success from the amount of income transferred to the poor to the number of poor who moved from welfare to economic independence. We took the belief of most Americans — that welfare should be a hand up, not a handout — and made it law. ... Instead of undermining the expectation that low-income parents and individuals

should strive to support themselves, benefit programs like food stamps must ensure that those benefits are better targeted to those who need help the most. For the sake of low-income families as well as the taxpayers the federal government's entire system of public assistance should be reformed to ensure that it promotes work. Each year this system dispenses nearly \$1 trillion in taxpayer funds across a maze of approximately 80 programs that are neither coordinated nor effective in solving poverty and lifting up families.

Some 27 million women, men and children around the world are victims of human trafficking. Trafficking in persons is both an affront to our fundamental values and, as a source of funds for transnational criminals and terrorist organizations, a threat to national and international security. The administration has used bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, targeted foreign assistance, training programs, public outreach and law enforcement to combat trafficking in persons across the globe. And the administration has provided technical assistance to improve law enforcement and grants to

support grassroots prevention efforts around the world targeting sex and labor trafficking, child sex tourism, forced child labor and other abuses. The administration also is committed to taking action at home to fight trafficking, including the sex trafficking of young girls.

Combating Human Trafficking

As we approach the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by the first Republican President Abraham Lincoln, we are reminded to be vigilant against human bondage in whatever form it appears. We will use the full force of the law against those who engage in

modern-day forms of slavery, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the forced labor of men, women and children. We call for increased diplomatic efforts with foreign governments to root out complicit public officials who facilitate or perpetrate this evil. We highlight the need for greater scrutiny of overseas labor contractors to prevent the imposition of usurious terms on temporary foreign workers brought to the United States. Our government must address the increasing role of vicious drug cartels and other gangs in controlling human smuggling across our southern border.

Party Platforms

In the last four years rates of serious crimes like murder, rape and robbery have reached 50-year lows, but there is more work to do. Democrats are fighting for new funding that will help keep cops on the street and support our police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. We support efforts to ensure our courageous police officers and first responders are equipped with the best technology, equipment and innovative strategies to prevent and fight crimes. We support local prison-to-work programs and other initiatives to reduce recidivism, making citizens safer and saving the taxpayers money. We understand the disproportionate effects of crime, violence and incarceration on communities of color and are committed to working with those communities to find solutions. We believe that the death penalty must not be arbitrary. DNA testing should be used in all appropriate circumstances, defendants should have effective assistance of counsel and the administration of justice should be fair and impartial. We will con-

tinue to nominate and confirm judges who are men and women of unquestionable talent and character and who will always demonstrate their faithfulness to our law and our Constitution and bring with them a sense of how American society works and how the American people live.

We must help state, local, territorial and tribal law enforcement work together to combat and prevent drug crime and drug and alcohol abuse, which are blights on our communities. We will continue to expand the use of drug courts. We support the rights of victims to be respected, heard and compensated.

Public Safety, Justice and Crime Prevention

Our national experience over the last several decades has shown that citizen vigilance, tough but fair prosecutors, meaningful sentences, protection of victims' rights and limits on judicial discretion can preserve public safety by keeping criminals off the streets. We support mandatory prison sentencing for gang crimes, violent or sexual offenses against children, repeat drug dealers, rape, robbery and murder. We support a national registry for convicted child murderers. We oppose parole for dangerous or repeat felons. Courts should have the option of imposing the death penalty in capital murder cases. Prisons should do more than punish — they should attempt to rehabilitate and institute proven prisoner reentry systems to reduce recidivism and future victimization.

Government at all levels should work with faith-based institutions that have proven track records in diverting young and first-time, nonviolent offenders from criminal careers. We endorse state and local initiatives that are trying new approaches to curbing drug abuse and diverting first-time offenders to rehabilitation. Public authorities must regain control of their correctional institutions. We cannot allow prisons to become ethnic or racial battlegrounds. Breaking the cycle of crime begins with the children of those who are prisoners. Deprived of a parent through no fault of their own, these youngsters should be a special concern of our schools, social services and religious institutions. We call on the states to make it a bipartisan priority to protect the rights of crime victims, who should also be assured of access to social and legal services. Federal criminal law should focus on acts by federal employees or acts committed on federal property — and leave the rest to the states. Then Congress should withdraw from federal departments and agencies the power to criminalize behavior, a practice which, according to the Congressional Research Service, has created "tens of thousands" of criminal offenses.

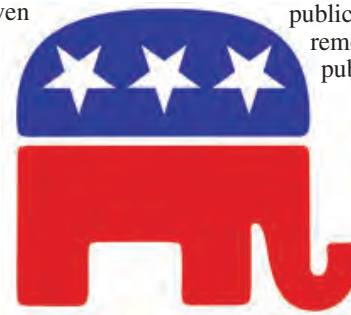
Democrats are committed to protecting our natural resources while creating jobs, preserving habitats and ensuring that future generations can enjoy our nation's outdoor heritage. Significant strides have been made to cut pollution and advance public health — protecting our children and communities from harmful pollution by restoring and advancing safeguards for clean air and water and by working to reduce carbon pollution. Democrats will continue to stand up to polluters in the interest of environmental and public health. We affirm the science of climate change, commit to significantly reducing the pollution that causes climate change and know we have to meet this challenge by driving smart policies that lead to greater growth in clean energy generation and result in a range of economic and social benefits. We have developed historic fuel efficiency standards that will limit greenhouse gas emissions from our vehicles for the first time in history, made unprecedented investments in clean energy and proposed the first-ever carbon pollution limits for new fossil-fuel-fired power plants. We will continue to support smart, energy-efficient manufacturing. Democrats

pledge to continue showing international leadership on climate change while working toward an agreement to set emission limits in unison with other emerging powers. We understand that global climate change may disproportionately affect the poor, and we are committed to environmental justice. Democrats will continue to work with local communities to conserve our publicly-owned lands and dramatically expand investments in conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and wetlands across America for generations to come. We will ensure that our national parks are protected while expanding opportunities for Americans to visit and experience these national treasures. We will continue working to ensure the integrity of the waters Americans rely on every day for drinking, swimming and fishing by supporting initiatives that restore our rivers, oceans, coasts and watersheds. We will preserve landscapes and ecosystems and open more lands and waters for hunting, fishing and recreation.

Environment

The environment is getting cleaner and healthier. The nation's air and waterways as a whole are much healthier than they were just a few decades ago. However, we need a dramatic change in the attitude of officials in Washington, a shift from a job-killing punitive mentality to a spirit of landowners and the public. Legislation to restore the authority of states in environmental protection is essential. We encourage the use of agricultural best management practices among the states to reduce pollution. The Republican Party believes in the moral obligation of the people to be good stewards of the God-given natural beauty and resources of our country and bases

environmental policy on several common-sense principles. We believe people are the most valuable resource, and human health and safety are the most important measurements of success. A policy protecting these objectives, however, must balance economic development and private property rights in the short run with conservation goals over the long run. Also, public access to public lands for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing and recreational shooting should be permitted on all appropriate federal lands. Science allows us to weigh the costs and benefits of a policy so that we can prudently deal with our resources. This is especially important when the causes and long-range effects of a phenomenon are uncertain. We must restore scientific integrity to our public research institutions and remove political incentives from publicly funded research.



The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports Roe v. Wade and a woman's right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right. Abortion is an intensely personal decision between a woman, her family, her doctor and her clergy; there is no place for politicians or government to get in the way. We also recognize that health care and education help reduce the number

of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions. We strongly and unequivocally support a woman's decision to have a child by providing affordable health care and ensuring the availability of and access to programs that help women during pregnancy and after the birth of a child, including caring adoption programs.

Abortion

Faithful to the "self-evident" truths enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, we assert the sanctity of human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and endorse legislation to make clear that the 14th Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues to promote or perform abortion or

fund organizations that perform or advocate it and will not fund or subsidize health care that includes abortion coverage. Republican leadership has led the effort to prohibit the barbaric practice of partial-birth abortion and permitted states to extend health care coverage to children before birth. We urge Congress to strengthen the Born Alive Infant Protection Act by enacting appropriate civil and criminal penalties on health care providers who fail to provide treatment and care to an infant who survives an abortion, including early induction delivery where the death of the infant is intended.

(continued on page 8)



Democrat

The Democratic Party maintains an unshakable commitment to Israel's security. Despite budgetary constraints, the president has worked with Congress to increase security assistance to Israel every single year since taking office. The administration has also worked to ensure Israel's qualitative military edge in the region. And we have deepened defense cooperation to help Israel address its most pressing threats, including the growing danger posed by rockets and missiles emanating from the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and Iran. The president's consistent support for Israel's right to defend itself and his steadfast opposition to any attempt to delegitimize Israel on the world stage are further evidence of our enduring commitment to Israel's security.

It is precisely because of this commitment that the Democratic Party seeks peace between Israelis and Palestinians. A just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian accord, producing two states for two peoples, would contribute to regional stability and help sustain Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state. President Obama will continue to press Arab states to reach out to Israel. We will insist that any Palestinian partner must recognize Israel's right to exist, reject violence and adhere to existing agreements.

Despite the two decades that have passed since the end of the Cold War, large stockpiles of nuclear weapons persist and more nations are interested in acquiring them. Nuclear testing and black-market trade in sensitive nuclear materials continue. And terrorists remain determined to buy, build or steal the ultimate weapon.

The Democratic Party is committed to preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and to eventually ridding the planet of these catastrophic weapons. It will require patience, perseverance and the steady accumulation of concrete actions. The Obama administration has moved away from Cold War thinking by reducing the prominence of nuclear weapons in America's national security strategy and has urged others to do the same.

As long as these weapons exist the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary and guarantee the defense of our allies. To reduce our warheads and stockpile, lower the threat of a nuclear exchange and lay the foundation for future progress, President Obama negotiated and signed the landmark New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia, producing cuts in each side's deployed nuclear stockpiles and launchers and allowing us to monitor and verify Russia's arsenal. The President will work with Russia to achieve additional reductions in stockpiles and nuclear delivery vehicles, including tactical and nondeployed nuclear weapons. We will also seek a new Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty that prohibits the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons. The Democratic Party is also committed to strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the bedrock of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries. As we work to uphold our obligations under the treaty by reducing stockpiles and recognizing the rights of all rule-abiding states to peaceful nuclear energy, we will insist that countries without nuclear weapons comply with their obligations not to develop them and will ensure that violators face real consequences.

Republican

Israel and the United States are part of the great fellowship of democracies who speak the same language of freedom, justice and the right of every person to live in peace. The security of Israel is in the vital national security interest of the United States; our alliance is based not only on shared interests, but also shared values. We affirm our

unequivocal commitment to Israel's security and will ensure that it maintains a qualitative edge in military technology

over any potential adversaries. We support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state with secure, defensible borders; and we envision two democratic states — Israel with Jerusalem as its capital and Palestine — living in peace and security. For that to happen, the Palestinian people must support leaders who reject terror, embrace the institutions and ethos of democracy, and respect the rule of law. We call on Arab governments throughout the region to help advance that goal. Israel should not be expected to negotiate with entities pledged to her destruction. We call on the new government in Egypt to fully uphold its peace treaty with Israel.

The Middle East

Nuclear Weapons

We recognize that the gravest terror threat we face — a nuclear attack made possible by nuclear proliferation — requires a comprehensive strategy for reducing the world's nuclear stockpiles and preventing the spread of those armaments. But the U.S. can lead that effort only if it maintains an effective strategic arsenal at a level sufficient to fulfill its deterrent purposes. The United States is the only nuclear power not modernizing its nuclear stockpile. The current administration has systematically undermined America's missile defense by abandoning the missile defense bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, reducing the number of planned interceptors in Alaska and cutting the budget for missile defense.

A strong and effective strategic arsenal is still necessary as a deterrent against competitors like Russia or China. But the danger in this age of asymmetric or nontraditional warfare comes from other quarters as well. With unstable regimes in Iran and North Korea determined to develop nuclear-tipped missiles capable of reaching the United States, and with the possibility that a terrorist group could gain control of a nuclear weapon, it is folly to abandon a missile shield for the country.

EDITOR'S NOTE — To read the full versions of the platforms, visit assets.dstatic.org/dnc-platform/2012-National-Platform.pdf and whitehouse12.com/republican-party-platform. To hear the candidates express their stands on hunger, watch the videos available at www.bread.org.

Baptist News Briefs

Compiled from Wire Services

Ky. Baptists may end Georgetown partnership

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The Kentucky Baptist Convention's (KBC) administrative committee has unanimously approved a recommendation to withdraw from the convention's ministry relationship with Georgetown College.

The committee's Sept. 11 recommendation will go to the KBC Mission Board, which could place it before messengers to the convention's Nov. 13 annual meeting.

"The Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown College have had a long and fruitful relationship for many, many years," committee chairman Floyd Paris, pastor of Unity Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., told the *Western Recorder*, Kentucky Baptists' newsjournal.

The time has now come to allow both organizations the freedom to pursue the direction of the Lord's leadership, Paris said.

"In recent years Georgetown has sought to expand their ecumenical appeal by increasing the number and influence of non-Baptist board members," Paris added.

Members of the KBC Mission Board will take up the matter when they meet prior to the KBC's annual meeting. If approved, the recommendation will proceed to convention messengers for consideration during the Nov. 13 convention. With messengers' approval a written notice of termination would follow, fulfilling a requirement of a one-year notification.

Coalition faces 'post-Christian' challenges

WASHINGTON — A diverse coalition of pastors and theological educators has launched an initiative offering a platform for evangelicals to develop theology and practice for mission and ministry in "post-Christian" North America.

The Missio Alliance will "provide a place for theological dialogue, training and the creation of resources to navigate present and future missional challenges," said Chris Backert, a key organizer of the effort.

An inaugural conference in April 2013 in suburban Washington will feature an array of presenters, including evangelical heavyweights Alan Hirsch, Scot McKnight and Dallas Willard.

"There's a need to consider afresh what God is doing and calling us to in His mission," Backert said. "In recent history we have witnessed increasing fragmentation within evangelical Protestantism and sharp denominational decline. Yet even amidst these challenges, we believe there is a unique opportunity to work toward the renewal of the church for mission in North America."

Among the conference sponsors are the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary and Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

NAMB to boost church planters' retirement accounts

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is providing a one-time deposit of \$1,200 into the retirement accounts of Southern Baptist church planters who have joined its Send North America Support Network. NAMB will provide a one-time contribution to planters who are five years or less into the process and who have joined its network by Oct. 31.

"Because of the faithfulness of Southern Baptists, we are able to bless our missionaries in this way," said Kevin Ezell, NAMB's president. "It is a small amount, but we hope this will help get many of them started toward setting aside money for retirement — even though for many that is a distant thought."

Micah Millican, director of church planter relations for NAMB, said, "We want planters to develop the discipline of investing in their financial future. We're not just interested in their success over the next five years but over the next five decades of ministry."

For more information, visit namb.net/cpprofile.

\$110,000 offering from Pastors Conference distributed

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Checks totaling more than \$110,000 for Southern Baptist causes have been distributed from the Pastors Conference offering received in June in New Orleans prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Of the money given at the conference, more than \$50,000 went to the International Mission Board to aid in Scripture translation and distribution projects; a \$50,000 check to the North American Mission Board and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering will be used in church planting; and \$10,000 was given to GuideStone for assistance to retired Southern Baptist ministers, workers and widows.

PRACTICE
is the key to safe teen driving.

- 50 hours of practice with an adult in various situations
- Know the Alabama Graduated Driver License Law
- Sign a Parent-Teen Agreement

Children's of Alabama®
ChildrensAL.org

This important safety message is being shared through our affiliation with The Alabama Safe Teen Driving Coalition and The AllState Foundation.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Baptist leaders: proclaim the gospel, plant churches, promote sound teaching

(continued from page 1)

Research, said the Pew report does not indicate a sky-is-falling moment. "I am one to quickly point out when there are struggles and challenges," Stetzer told Baptist Press. "But this is the natural progression of a secularized society that has lost the value of identifying itself as Christian.

"We have about the same percentage of evangelicals as we did over the last few decades. Furthermore, that holds true among young adults as well," he said.

The Church in America has become like a bear fed by tourists because of so-called "seekers" willing to return to church to recapture their childhood religious memories, Stetzer said.

"What happens when you feed the bear is eventually it can't fend for itself," Stetzer said. "I think the people of the Church have to

learn to fend for themselves by going out and proclaiming the gospel, not counting on a really cool church to preach the gospel for them."

Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said believers should be more concerned about the loss of a Christian majority in Protestant churches than the loss of a Protestant majority in the U.S.

"What we should pay attention to instead may be the fresh wind of orthodox Christianity whistling through the leaves — especially throughout the Third World, and in some unlikely places in North America as well," Moore wrote Oct. 9 at russellmoore.com.

"Sometimes animists, Buddhists and body-pierced Starbucks employees are more fertile ground for the gospel than the confirmed

Episcopalian at the helm of the Rotary Club."

It's not necessarily a bad thing that this generation of Christ-followers in the U.S. finds itself engaging a culture that is unfamiliar with the claims of Jesus rather than one that thinks it already knows what Christianity is about, he said. "The American Protestant majority is over," Moore wrote. "Now let's pray for something new — like a global Christian majority, on earth as it is in heaven." (BP)

Columbia Assoc. worker arrested

Tonya Woodward, who worked with Columbia Baptist Association as financial secretary and administrative assistant to Director of Missions Jerry Grandstaff, was arrested Oct. 8, according to news reports coming out of Dothan.

According to a report by the *Dothan Eagle*, court records show that Dothan police investigators arrested Woodward, charging her with 10 felony counts of second-degree theft of property.

The charges allege Woodward committed a series of thefts from Columbia Association during the year, according to the warrants reported by the *Dothan Eagle*.

She was released from custody after posting bail, according to records reported by the *Dothan Eagle*.

Grandstaff said that on the advice of the association's attorneys, the association is not commenting on the issue due to the ongoing investigation.

Woodward is a member of Cloverdale Baptist Church, Dothan. (TAB)

Spring 2013
WOMEN OF JOY
3 Days 2 Nights 1 Purpose

Jeremy Camp
Lisa Whelchel
Liz Curtis Higgs
Kay Warren
Angela Thomas
Charles Billingsley
Jill Kelly & more!

Jill Kelly
Speaker

Jeremy Camp
Concert Artist

Absolute Surrender

Presented by Phil Waldrep Ministries

Louisville, KY Apr. 5-7
Sevierville, TN Apr. 12-14
Oklahoma City, OK Apr. 19-20
Branson, MO Apr. 26-28
Myrtle Beach, SC May 3-5

Call for a free brochure or visit our website!

womenofjoy.org | 1.800.475.0813

DUMAS
Makers of Solid Wood Church Furniture Since 1928
Pews • Pulpits • Pulpit Chairs • Choir Chairs
Communion Tables • Lecterns • Hymn Boards

ROGER ROBERTS, FACTORY REPRESENTATIVE
Grove Hill, Alabama
800-633-6896 (phone)
251-605-0774 (mobile)
www.dumaspews.com
rogerdumas@tds.net

MUM FESTIVAL
AT Bellingrath
Gardens and Home

SEE ONE OF THE NATION'S LARGEST AND MOST SPECTACULAR
OUTDOOR CASCADING CHRYSANTHEMUM DISPLAYS

OPEN DAILY 8AM - 5PM, CLOSED DEC. 25TH
Fall events for everyone...
Balloon Glow in the Gardens • Oct 27th
Chrysanthemum Bloom Out • Nov 10 - 22nd

GROUPS WELCOME • SHOPPING • DINING • BUS PARKING
WWW.BELLINGRATH.ORG
20 Miles SW of Mobile, Alabama • 800.247.8420 / 251.973.2217

Hanley & Associates
A financial advisory practice of
Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.

Steve Hanley, MBA,
Financial Advisor
Pat Waters,
Client Service Coordinator
Christy Smitherman,
Marketing Manager
Dan Rollo,
CFP, Financial Advisor

1142 Montlilar Drive
Mobile, AL 36609 251.345.0601

Ameriprise
Financial
Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.,
Member FINRA and SIPC.

Harvest Evangelism celebrates 'what God still does'

Rick Hagans, founder and president of Harvest Evangelism in Opelika, has a sign in his ministry's office that states, "Programs don't change people. God changes people."

It is a message that resounds throughout the different outreaches of Harvest Evangelism, a ministry that reaches out to the homeless and those struggling with life-controlling problems like drug and alcohol abuse.

Hagans, a member of First Baptist Church, Opelika, and a traveling evangelist who has been preaching since he "was 9 years old," began a Christian ministry in Auburn in 1980 known as East Alabama Challenge along with a Christian coffeehouse. That coffeehouse later morphed into what is now known as His Place, a "place of restoration for men 18

years and older" who have life-controlling problems.

Hagans also began a similar program for women called Hosanna Home, open to women over the age of 18 who are troubled by life-controlling problems; Hope's Inn, which reaches out to women in crisis situations; Hope Clinic, a free medical clinic located within Hope's Inn that serves Chambers, Randolph and Tallapoosa counties; and the 116,000-square-foot Harvest Thrift Super Center in Opelika, which provides employment opportunities to some of the programs' graduates.

But because the ministry takes no government money, Hagans ex-

plained that events like an annual banquet raise needed funds to care for these men and women, about 80 percent of whom come from Christian homes and backgrounds.

"We believe we're a ministry of the Church, and we trust the Church and Christian people to help us," he said. "If we didn't have people to stand with us we could never do it on our own."

This year's 25th annual banquet was held Oct. 1. The event raises 10 to 15 percent of the ministry's yearly budget, Hagans said.

Nineteen people attended the first banquet. In stark contrast, this year's event, held at Opelika Event Center, drew ap-

proximately 650 attendees.

During the banquet, people who have gone through the ministry's programs shared testimonies of how they had been helped and how God restored them.

Jim Cymbala, pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, N.Y., and author of "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire," served as the evening's guest speaker. Hagans, who has preached at The Brooklyn Tabernacle, said he was excited to have Cymbala speak to those in attendance.

"The banquet is a chance to celebrate what God still does — He still reaches the least and the last and the lost," Hagans explained. "To have some little kid come up and say, 'Thank you for bringing my mommy back,' — that's ... what the banquet is about."

(Julie Payne)



HAGANS

Alabama Cooperative Program Gifts

Alabama Baptist Giving
Year to Date through September 30, 2012

SEPTEMBER

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$3,641,666
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$2,710,763
Under Goal for Month	\$930,903

YEAR TO DATE

CP Challenge Budget Goal	\$32,774,994
CP Challenge Budget Gifts	\$30,500,886
Under Goal for Year	\$2,274,108

CHURCHBusCenter.com

Just a few clicks and you'll find the right bus for your needs AND your budget!

- Special Financing Offers
- Exceptional Service Facilities
- Dedicated Warranty Personnel
- Full Inventory of Replacement Parts

800-367-9463 ChurchBusCenter.com is powered by TheBusCenter.com
A DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION SOUTH

MARKET PLACE

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR EMAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

CHURCH POSITIONS
SENIOR PASTOR: First Baptist Church of Vernon in the Lamar County Association is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 430, Vernon, AL 35592.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Bethel Baptist Church, Brent, Ala., is seeking a bivocational pastor to begin Jan. 1, 2013. Send resumés to: Danny Russell, 298 Tabernacle Road, Brent, AL 35034.

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church in Fairhope, Ala., is searching for a music director. This is a part-time position with preference in traditional and blended leadership. Some contemporary music is acceptable. Please send resumés to: Fairhope Avenue Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 1086, Fairhope, AL 36533, or fabc@att.net.

YOUTH MINISTER/DIRECTOR: First Baptist Church of Thomasville, Ga., is seeking a full-time youth minister/director. Seminary degree is preferred. Position would be primarily focused on ministry to 7th–12th grades. If interested or if more information is required, please email Reid Wylie (associate pastor of young adults and next generations) at rwylie@fbcthomasville.com.

YOUTH PASTOR: Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala., has an opening for a full-time youth pastor. If interested, please contact Chris Cross at cpcross1@yahoo.com.

OTHER POSITIONS
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY'S RETAIL CENTER — SEEKING MANAGER: Must have management experience along with organizational, personnel and computer skills. Must be able to lift up to 40 lbs. and assist in all areas of the store. Must have clean driving record and valid DL. Must be personable and friendly. Salary is competitive and based on experience. For more information, email adam@jimmiemalemission.com.

INDEPENDENT SALES ASSOCIATE CONTRACTOR: The 170-year-old *Alabama Baptist* is an award-winning statewide weekly newspaper with more than 200,000 readers. Baptists comprise the largest Christian denomination in Alabama with membership of more than a million. *The Alabama Baptist* is seeking contract sales people with the ability to develop advertising partnerships with businesses and organizations interested in reaching the key demographics of our readers and growing their business. As an independent sales associate contractor, you would work from your home office with no territory restrictions. *The Alabama Baptist*, Inc. provides a unique working environment. We are partners with the churches of the Alabama Baptist State Convention working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each employee is expected to manage his/her personal and professional life in accordance with this relationship and consistent with the traditions of *The Alabama Baptist*. Send resumés and inquiries to: bgilmore@

thealabamabaptist.org.

BUSINESS
MATTRESS LIQUIDATION: Queen sets \$150 and up. King sets \$225 and up. Other sizes available. National brands, new in plastic. Call or text 256-452-1991.

MOVING? LOCAL, STATEWIDE OR LONG DISTANCE: Coleman American/Allied Van Lines. Special rate and programs for Alabama Baptist ministers, staff and church members. Call Gary Washington at 205-540-7470.

NEED A CHURCH PIANIST?: We have piano CDs for churches to sing by. Hymns, gospel, Christmas, choruses, etc. Worship Service Resources, 1-877-977-6800. Free demo. www.wsrpianocds.com.

CHRISTIAN VALUES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: Christian Values Technology Company seeks mature business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office. Hands-on support and apprenticeship-style training. For complete information, call Paul at 888-710-6994.

CHURCH SIGNS: Reliable Signs offers design, fabrication, installation and service. All types of signs from electronic messaging to traditional. Statewide coverage. Christian-owned. Many church references available. www.reliablesigns.com 800-729-6844, 205-664-0955.

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTION: egive-usa.com — Good stewardship

made easy. Please call or email us for a free brochure. 1-866-303-6623 or brad@egive-usa.com.

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION
CHURCH BUILDING PROJECTS: Let Webb Builders help your church expand its facilities. Large or small projects. Your plans or use our custom-design building services. State licensed with 25+ years experience. Call Webb Builders Inc., 334-285-9302. Millbrook, Ala. Numerous church references available.

TRAVEL/VACATION
LOG CABIN: Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

MISCELLANEOUS
JUDGMENT DAY EVANGELISTIC DRAMA: Cottage Hill Baptist, Pleasant Grove, AL 35127. Oct. 27, 6–10 p.m. Oct. 28–31, 6–9 p.m. Reservations: 205-744-8521 or cottagehillbaptist.org.

EXPERIENCE "A VISIT WITH LOTTIE MOON": An inspiring and touching live dramatic monologue by Laurita Mullins Miller perfect for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering emphasis. Email christiancloseups@charter.net or call 205-267-2945.

FOR SALE
LESLEY SPEAKERS: #971 and 525. Installed 1 year. Never used. Price \$4,500. Call 256-739-4628 or 256-775-6307.

Want to know God?

By Pastor Scotty Hogan
Westmeade Baptist Church, Decatur

Have you noticed some people are really loud and to get attention they get even louder? God can be loud if needed. He can shout into our life through circumstances, events and tragedies. He can make Himself known through hurts and pain. But most often when it comes to calling us to salvation and knowing Him, it is more in line with the way He spoke to Elijah. The Bible declares in 1 Kings 19:10–11, "And he said, 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.' And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

That is the way it is with most of us. God speaks with whispered tones. In the deep recesses of our mind, where no one knows but you and God, He speaks. It is so subtle that sometimes we question if the voice we heard was God or was our mind just playing tricks on us. His still small voice interrupts the routine of our lives, calls us to question our actions and to contemplate our future. God generally does not shout to call us to repentance. He does not scold us in a raised voice over our sin. He does not loudly call our name to our embarrassment in the midst of a crowd to correct us. He could, but He does not.

The Bible says in Romans 2:4 that it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance. It is His loving kindness that speaks His still small voice to our hearts, calling us out of darkness into His light. For some the image of God is the cosmic cop wanting to catch us in our sin and arrest us for all our wrongs. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He loved the whole world enough to send the most precious gift of all, His dear Son, to be our Savior, Redeemer.

Listen for His voice today. The writer of Hebrews declares in Hebrews 3:15, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." Do you hear Him?

About Alabama

State Budget: Not Out of the Woods Yet

By Jim Williams
Special to The Alabama Baptist

On Sept. 18 Alabamians voted to supplement the state's general fund operating budget by transferring \$437 million from the Alabama Trust Fund (ATF) over the next three years. The general fund budget is smaller today than in 2008; it would have been unbalanced without money from the state's "savings account," forcing the governor to make significant reductions.

This is a continuing problem. The general fund received millions in federal subsidies from 2009–2011. It also received \$162 million from the ATF in 2009, which the state must pay back over 10 years. Although the new transfers do not require repayment, state officials have publicly committed to doing so. This will mean taking \$600 million from future general fund revenues to repay the ATF rather than provide services.

Clearly the state budget is not out of the woods yet. It needs more revenue growth and better spending controls.

The state's general fund revenues always have been anemic, due in part to low taxes. Alabama has collected the lowest state and local tax revenues per capita in 23 of the past 25 years, and we earmark 84 percent of state taxes. Most high-growth taxes belong to the separate education budget. While the

Legislature has moved some earmarked money to the general fund, doing more is controversial.

Key Alabama officials have a "no new taxes" stance but support action by Congress so that states can collect existing taxes on Internet, mail order and telephone transactions with out-of-state companies. This might raise more than \$200 million annually, half going to the state.

Medicaid consumes more than a third of the general fund budget. Federal rules hamper control of its costs and unfairly reduce funding to high-poverty states like Alabama. The presidential candidates want to change the program in very different ways, and states will have to make major decisions regardless of who wins.

Alabama's path out of the woods also must include a bigger commitment to setting goals and tracking performance within state agencies, and better control over processes like the use of technology that promise savings across agency lines. Otherwise it's likely that in the future state officials will again have to decide how to bail out the general fund budget.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jim Williams is executive director for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama.

Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **Canaan Church, Bessemer**, will hold the Hallelujah Carnival Oct. 31, 6:30–8:30 p.m. There will be a gospel hayride, cake walk, trunk and treat, games and more. For information call 205-425-4381. Morgan Bailey is pastor. ► **Seventh Street Church, Bessemer**, will celebrate its 90th homecoming Oct. 28, 10:30 a.m. Wesley Wade will sing and a pot-luck lunch will follow the service. Sam Davidson is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **Stacey Boutwell** is the new minister of education and senior adults for **Lakeside Church, Birmingham**. He is an adjunct professor of theological and historical studies for New Orleans Seminary's Birmingham extension and previously served at Grace Church, Oxford. Richard Trader is interim pastor.



BOUTWELL

BIBB

► **First Church, West**

Blocton, will celebrate founder's day Oct. 21, 11 a.m. Ronnie Blake will speak and sing and lunch will follow the service. Robert Praytor is pastor.

CALHOUN

► **New Haven Church, Aniston**, will hold its annual holiday bazaar with Christmas trees, wreaths, arrangements, toys, gifts and more for sale, Nov. 2, 5–8 p.m. and Nov. 3, 8 a.m.–noon. Roy Cordle is pastor.

CHILTON

► **Clint Harris** resigned as pastor of **Pates Chapel Church, Jemison**, to become the pastor of Crestview Church, Prattville. His first day at Crestview was Oct. 7.

COFFEE

► The youth of **Macedonia Church, Enterprise**, will collect blankets, coats, scarves and gloves at the church for the homeless and others in need from 7 p.m. Nov. 3 until 9 a.m. Nov. 4. For information call 334-347-7364. Lane Harris is pastor.

EAST LIBERTY

► **Ronnie Jordan** is the new pastor of **First Church, Lanett**. He holds an associate degree from Chattahoochee Valley Community

College in Phenix City, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Troy University and a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as pastor of Callaway Church, LaGrange, Ga.; Crystal Valley Church and Oates Avenue Church, Columbus, Ga.; Avalon Woods Church, Seale; and Talisheek Church, Talisheek, La. He has been an adjunct professor at Luther Rice Bible College



JORDAN

and Seminary for the Columbus, Ga., extension and at New Orleans Seminary's South Georgia extension. He was a deputy sheriff in Muscogee County, Ga.,

for 10 years and is an honorably discharged U.S. Navy veteran. He and his wife, Kathy, have one son.

MARSHALL

► **Jeff Martin** is the new pastor of **Southside Church, Albertville**. He previously served as pastor of Carlisle Church, Boaz, from 2005–2012 and as youth minister of Solitude Church, Albertville, from 1999–2003. He and his wife, Beth, have three children.

MORGAN

► **Shiloh Church, Somerville**, will present an eight-scene walk-through drama, *The Judgement Seat*, Oct. 29–Nov. 1, 6–10 p.m. Reservations will be offered to groups of 10 or more. Reservations are not required but recommended for large groups. Recommended for ages 10 and up; no child care will be available. For information call 256-286-0509. Charles Owens is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Jason Dunlap** has resigned as pastor of **Sharon Heights Church, Birmingham**.

SIPSEY

► **Cross Roads Missionary Church, Gordo**, will hold revival Oct. 28–31, Sunday at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. Monday–Wednesday. Jerry Elmore will speak. Delbert Canterbury is pastor. ► **Sipsey Association's** annual meeting will be at New Hope Missionary Church, Berry, Nov. 1 with sessions at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. A covered-dish dinner will be at 5 p.m. Max Strippling is director of missions.

TALLAPOOSA

► **Hillabee Church, Alexander City**, will celebrate homecoming Oct. 21, 10 a.m. Bill Hand will speak and Don Macon will lead music. Lunch will follow. Vince Lee is pastor.

A Day With Dr. Henry Blackaby



Sunday, October 28
10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Deerfoot Baptist Church
5450 Mt. Olive Church Rd.
Trussville, Alabama 35173
(at corner of Deerfoot Parkway & I-59, Exit 143)

205-655-0798
website: www.deerfootbaptist.org

Dr. Roger D. Willmore, Senior Pastor

THE PERSECUTION



For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. Mark 8:35

Spring Valley Baptist Church presents:
THE PERSECUTION
Saturday & Sunday
October 20, 21, 27, 28
Live Performances at
6 & 7:30 p.m.

Admission is FREE!
Everyone is welcome!
For more information
call (205) 567-2567.

4193 U.S. Hwy. 11,
Springville, Alabama

www.SpringValleyBaptistChurch.org

BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY

Our Standard is Christ

BEYOND YOUR BEST



Excel beyond your highest goals. At Belhaven University, you will find yourself in a place where top-rated faculty and a nurturing environment converge to bring you to your best... then propel you beyond what you believe is achievable.

Nationally recognized academics. Vibrant campus life. Christ-centered worldview. The faith-affirming support to become more. Aim for excellence from God's perspective. Visit BelhavenUniversity.com...your place to discover your purpose.

belhaven.edu

Schedule a personal visit to Belhaven University
or attend our next Discover Day.

Poll: most Americans do not mind athletes expressing faith on, off field

Tim Tebow can wear all the Bible verses he wants on his eye black: most Americans don't mind professional athletes expressing their faith on and off the field, according to a new study.

A poll conducted by Grey Matter Research and Consulting shows that 49 percent of Americans see

athletes' public expressions of faith favorably; 32 percent don't care and 19 percent take a more negative view.

More than 1,000 American adults were polled about public displays of religion among professional athletes. Participants were asked about specific religious actions commonly displayed by religious athletes including prayer after games, speaking about faith in interviews and making religious signs, such as crossing oneself or pointing heavenward, on the field.

"As a Christian, it's very encouraging because I believe we recognize the influence that Christian athletes can have," especially in such a sports-minded country, said Josh Canales, the Los Angeles

County director for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Canales played baseball at University of Florida and University of California, Los Angeles, then played three seasons for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Americans are most supportive of opposing teams praying together after games with 55 percent of all Americans viewing it positively.

Americans' least favorite expression of religion is when "athletes suggest that God helped them or their team accomplish something," according to the study. Responses to statements such as "God really gave me strength out there" or "I kept believing and God let me hit that home run," are viewed negatively by 26 percent of respondents. (RNS)

GuideStone to hold retirement event

GuideStone Financial Resources has announced its plans for Retirement:Now, a free one-week event to coincide with National Save for Retirement Week (Oct. 21-27).

Retirement:Now "will help employers create a retirement-focused interactive learning environment for the benefit of their employees," according to a GuideStone news release.

Organizations need to simply download ready-to-use resources that they can make available to employees throughout the week. Materials are applicable to all employees.

Retirement:Now resources can be accessed at <http://www.guidestoneretirement.org/Promotions/Retirement-Now.aspx>. (BP)

5-YEAR/60,000-MILE BODY & CHASSIS WARRANTY

STANDARD WITH EVERY NEW BUS PURCHASE

Carpenter Bus Sales has gone the extra mile again in providing a unique 5-year/60,000-mile body & chassis warranty* with every new bus they sell!

An option like this would normally add \$3,000 to the price of a bus. With Carpenter Bus, it comes standard.



Call 866-750-5658 or visit us online at CarpenterBus.com



*Details on this Limited Warranty at www.carpenterbus.com/5-60

The Eufaula Tour of Homes
December 1, 2012

An enchanting tour of the South's finest homes draped in holiday cheer. Experience Christmas past and present in 7 different homes as you enjoy a traditional Southern lunch and an elegant dinner at Shorter Mansion. Limited seating and reservations required.

Prices: 888-383-2852 or www.eufaulapilgrimage.com

Want to see your news in *The Alabama Baptist*?
Email your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

JUNE 14-15 2013 | BJCC | BIRMINGHAM, AL
WWW.GRIDIRONMEN.ORG | 1.800.475.0814

IT'S TIME FOR MEN TO **stand.**
IN THE WORKPLACE
IN THE HOME
IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

JOSH MCDOWELL CHARLES BILLINGSLEY TIM TEBOW
FRED LUTER PHIL WALDREP

GRIDIRON Men's Conference®

YEAR END SPECIALS

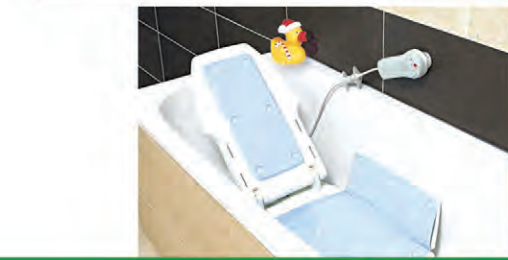
If you've been in the market for a walk-in tub or tub lift seat, there has never been a better time to buy!



Hydro therapy walk-in tub

- \$7,900 complete installation — normally \$8,500
- Compare to competitors' price of \$14,000-15,000 with Premiere, Safety Tub and Zon walk-in tubs
- Lifetime warranty

Ask about our no money down, no interest 12 months same as cash program on walk-in tubs*
*Approved credit through Enter Bank Corp.



Power tub lift seat

- Unbelievable \$100 off regular price
- Five-year warranty

Call CHARLIE today and see how DREAM BATHS OF ALABAMA can change how you feel.

sears Certified bathroom remodeler for Sears Home Services in the State of Alabama.

DREAM BATHS OF ALABAMA

334-312-1825 • 1-855-849-5048 (toll-free)

www.dreambathsalabama.com • www.alabamasafetybath.com

‘Go where God leads’

Forest Park volunteer follows God to Mexico in search of Montgomery Mixtec family

(continued from page 1)
 prepared for the kindergarten class which he would enter the following school year,” McCullough said.

Sherry White, a volunteer who had been on multiple missions trips to Mexico, related well with the women and families — especially Joselina’s — dedicating time and energy to nurturing the children. But despite the progress the family had made learning English, Raoul, Joselina’s husband,

was deported to Mexico. Knowing she would now be the sole provider for her family, Joselina learned the bus system and began working outside of the home.

However, the family missed Raoul and moved back to Mexico to be with him.

The center volunteers were disheartened to see them leave, so White promised that on her next missions trip she would locate them.

In July of this year an opportu-

nity arose for White to travel to Mexico.

She corresponded with Oscar, a missionary friend there, and learned Joselina’s children had been ill and their living conditions were poor.

‘My heart was broken’

Arriving in Mexico, White met with the family and was shocked by their weight loss and seeming hopelessness.

“My heart was broken. God had

plans for this family,” White wrote on the ministry’s blog. “I knew God had not brought me on this journey to find the family in this situation and not help, so I started trying to find out how much would it cost to pay for housing and utilities.”

White and others partnered with a local church that helped them locate an inexpensive house. They offered the house to the family if Joselina and Raoul agreed to send their children to school, attend church and find employment. The family immediately agreed.

In September, White returned to visit the family for accountability,



Photo courtesy of Forest Park Ministry Center

CALLED TO GO — Forest Park Ministry Center volunteer Sherry White spends time with Raoul, Joselina and their family.

discipleship and mentoring. She found an employed Raoul and a family settling into their home and working toward assimilating into the community.

White feels that through learning about Joselina’s family and helping them in their need, she has been taught an important lesson: Go where God leads.

‘He is working’

“We feel that God has shown us that He is working, whether in our neighborhood or in another country, and we must be willing to surrender to the call to go — where He leads,” White wrote on the ministry’s blog.

“You never know — a simple trip into the neighborhood could lead you to the mountains of Mexico.”

For more information about Forest Park Ministry Center, call 334-269-5726 or visit www.forestpark-ministry.blogspot.com.

KINGDOM
 STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE
A ministry of The Baptist Foundation of Alabama

BIG JAR GIVING

What if you learned that 91% of a person’s ability to give is not from cash or income? On average, our net worth is made up of 9% cash (“small jar”) and 91% non-cash (“big jar”) assets. While cash donations are important, an individual’s greatest ability to give comes from big jar assets. Therefore, how a person plans his or her estate is perhaps the largest act of financial stewardship they will ever undertake.

Contact us today at (334) 394-2000 to start on your FREE Estate Design Plan or directly access our Estate Plan Organizer at www.tbfa.org.

The BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA | P.O. BOX 241227 | MONTGOMERY, AL 36124-1227

GLASSDESIGNS
www.glassdesignsopelika.com

STAINED GLASS

- Home, church, business
- Free consultation and estimates
- References available

Opelika, Alabama

334-749-5520
achamblee5520@charter.net

Thompson Sound, Inc.

Installing Excellence in
SOUND • LIGHTING • VIDEO

256.974.SOUND (7686)
www.thompsonsound.com

Our goal in business and in life is to glorify Jesus Christ and spread the good news of His grace.

Like us

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For October 21

Explore the Bible By Jay T. Robertson Assistant Professor of Christian Ministries, University of Mobile

LIVING IN COMMUNITY 1 Peter 4:1-11

Support One Another (1-6)

Christians ought to live in such a way that we shock the unbelievers around us. We need to prepare ourselves mentally to be willing to suffer for Jesus as we live for His glory in all that we do. We must continually remind ourselves that the One we worship was a poor, homeless prophet who was crucified. The Christian life is the best life, but it's not the easiest life. Following Jesus as His disciple is not equivalent to taking a stroll in the park.

Christians ought to shock unbelievers around them because they live differently. No one meets Jesus and stays the same. Because Jesus lives we live for Jesus. We no longer serve sin as our master. We do not spend our days overcome by the desires of the flesh as we once did. Now we live for the will of God. By the power of transforming grace, Christians have closed the book on godless living. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to resist the temptations to fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh. Our lives are not to be characterized by sensuality, immoral pleasure-seeking or unholy lifestyles. Christians are continually being transformed more and more into the image of Christ.

As Christians experience transformation they encounter a reaction from unbelievers. Unbelievers are puzzled and then outraged when believers do not participate with them in their sinful practices.

Christian, remain faithful and finish strong. Remember Jesus will judge them for how they have persecuted you. As Peter encouraged believers in verse 6, we should live courageously by the power of the Holy Spirit. By our lives and our lips we testify of Jesus to the unbelievers around us.

Love One Another (7-9)

As we live in light of the end and the final judgment, a sense of urgency should characterize our lives. Christians should use good judgment and stay calm in a spirit of prayer.

Do not lose your head and act irrationally. Peter exhorted the believer to think clearly and pray about everything.

Christians should continue loving one another earnestly. We should stretch our love for one another to the limit. The word "earnestly" pictures an athlete straining to reach the goal. Christlike love is something we have to work at, just the way an athlete works on his skills. Christlike love means we treat others the way God treats us.

When we love someone we will forgive his or her sins. Love does not condone someone's sin. Rather, love will "cover" sin in that love motivates us to hide the sin from others and not spread it around. No one can hide his sins from God, but Christians ought to try, in love, to cover each other's sins from people outside the circle of offense.

Our Christlike love should not only be earnest and forgiving, but it also should be practical. We should share our homes with others in generous and uncomplaining hospitality. In New Testament times hospitality was an important thing because there were few inns and poor Christians could not afford to stay at them anyway. Persecuted believers in particular would need places to stay where they could be assisted and encouraged. Hospitality was to be shown to all within the body of Christ. Love opens the door of your heart and home.

Serve One Another (10-11)

Everybody is somebody in Christ's body. And everybody in His body, the Church, has received a spiritual gift. Every Christian has been graciously gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve others. Spiritual gifts are not toys for personal enjoyment; rather, they are tools for public employment. God has entrusted believers with these gifts to use for the glory of God and the building up of the Church.

Some people are gifted to speak and others to serve. Both types of gifts are important for the Church to accomplish its mission of reaching new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Spiritual gifts are not fundamentally a privilege but a responsibility, a call to be faithful with what God has bestowed.

Bible Studies for Life By David Hogg Academic Dean at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

FROM FAILURE TO CORRECTION Exodus 15:19-21; Numbers 12:1-3, 8-13, 15

Acknowledge God's Leadership (Ex. 15:19-21)

Why do good things happen to sinful people? This is not a common question, is it? The more common question is why do bad things happen to good people? The general premise of such questions is either that people are inherently good or that despite a sinful nature, we still deserve good. In light of this, how can God let bad things happen?

The point here is not to delve into the question of God's justice or the extent of human sinfulness but to highlight what we see in this passage. Israel had just been freed from the bondage of the Egyptian people, led through the desert by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, and rescued from an army far better trained and more powerful than they could ever hope to be. They responded in precisely the right way: praise and worship. God had just done a wonderful thing for a sinful people. When God's people respond to His grace and mercy with praise and worship, we are expressing gratitude. Worship and praise are, in part, a tacit acknowledgement that sinful people have received something good that they do not deserve. Yet what happened just prior to this act of praise, and what immediately follows it? Grumbling, complaining and criticism. It is not just difficult to complain while you praise God, it is impossible. We must appreciate that He is worthy of praise, for He is constantly demonstrating His goodness to us and to those around us.

Avoid a Critical Spirit (Num. 12:1-3)

Sadly, Miriam and Aaron did not maintain their gratitude and over time began to develop what the writer of Hebrews called a "root of bitterness." Initially it appears that these two siblings had an issue with Moses' wife being a Cushite. What part of being a Cushite bothered them, we are not told. In

verse 2, however, we discover the real issue: they resent that Moses is the leader and the spokesman for God. What is most disturbing about this development is that there is no account of Moses having done anything to provoke such an outburst. In fact, in verse 3 we are told that Moses was more meek or humble than anyone on the face of the earth.

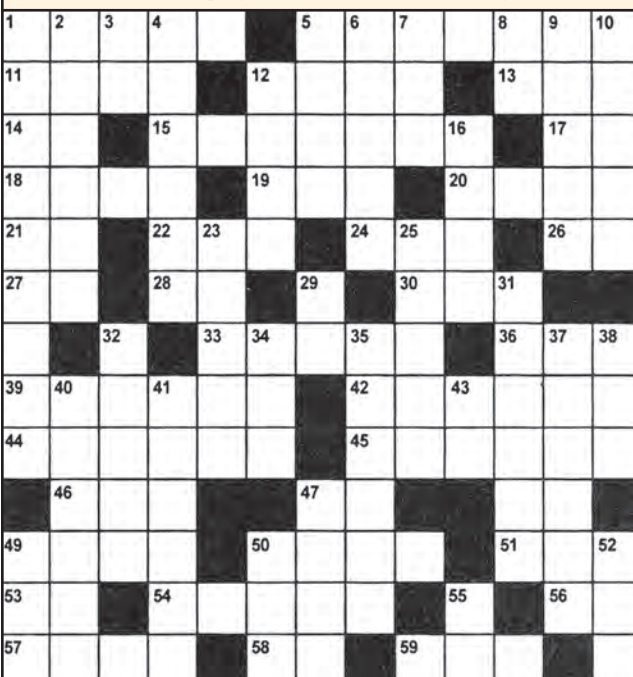
This highlights the fact that we cannot blame others for our sin. Sometimes it can be so easy to hold someone else responsible for our faults and reactions, but we must remember that our reactions are our reactions. No one can make us sin; we choose to sin or sin out of habit. In this instance the sin was clearly a choice. Aaron and Miriam chose to become self-important and self-righteous through criticism and jealousy. How could this have happened? While we do not know the specific reasons, one thing had to be true: they had ceased to offer praise and thanksgiving to God in worship for His undeserved goodness to them. The best way to avoid a critical spirit is not just to try to avoid it but to do the opposite — be thankful for others and what God is doing through them.

Accept God's Correction (Num. 12:8-13, 15)

In Numbers 12:2 we read, "And the Lord heard it," referring to the complaining. There are few moments more awkward, embarrassing and shameful than speaking ill of someone behind their back only to have your conversation overheard by that person or someone close to them. This is what happened to Miriam. What do you do when that happens? Too many people try to justify themselves, which only digs a deeper hole. Wisely, neither Miriam nor Aaron offered any excuses or justification for their sin. Aaron admitted their guilt and in so doing returned to what he should never have stopped doing — praying. If Miriam and Aaron had only continued in prayer and praise and worship out of a heart of thanksgiving they would never have ended up where they did. They would never have left where they belonged.

Christian Crossword

By Pamela Jensen Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



Across

- ___, and be not afraid. (Matt. 17:7)
- Be of good ___. (Isa. 41:6)
- I will bless her, and ___ thee a son. (Gen. 17:16)
- I will ___ all the families. (Jer. 1:15)
- American Library Association. (abbr.)
- Symbol for element rubidium.
- Every man according to his ___. (Acts 11:29)
- The kingdom of ___ in Bashan. (Josh. 13:12)
- Salah begat ___. (Gen. 10:24)
- Airport code for Tel Aviv/Jaffa, Israel.
- British rank above a viscount and below a marquis.
- Ex officio. (abbr.)
- A small, low islet of coral.
- Extravehicular activity. (abbr.)
- Turn ___ unto me. (Zech. 1:3)

- Minnesota. (abbr.)
- ___ shall offer it. (Lev. 1:3)
- The ___ of the Lord. (John 12:38)
- Capital of South Korea.
- Play on the hole of the ___. (Isa. 11:8)
- And ___ is the way. (Matt. 7:14)
- Daughters shall be ___. (Isa. 60:4)
- A company or group.
- A group of five.
- One ___ without blemish. (Num. 6:14)
- Master of Arts. (abbr.)
- Eleazar the son of ___. (2 Sam. 23:9)
- Eight quarts.
- For the sky is ___. (Matt. 16:2)
- Actual Weight. (abbr.)
- Large open Eskimo boat.
- I come to ___ thy will. (Heb. 10:9)
- Monsignor. (abbr.)
- The Lord is ___ hand. (Joel 1:15)
- The patience of ___.

- ### Down
- Make an ___ with me. (Isa. 36:16)
 - A narrow strip of fabric.
 - Intravenous. (abbr.)
 - ___ me ... and know my heart. (Ps. 139:23)
 - Whosoever shall ___ on the name. (Acts 2:21)
 - In her mouth was an ___ leaf. (Gen. 8:11)
 - Ultimate. (abbr.)
 - Associate in Arts. (abbr.)
 - To him be ___. (Rev. 1:6)
 - He shall fly as an ___. (Jer. 48:40)
 - In the ___ of David. (Luke 2:4)
 - To Jerusalem every ___. (Luke 2:41)
 - Sixth century B.C. Greek author of fables.
 - Of more ___ than many sparrows. (Luke 12:7)
 - I will not ___ it. (Gen. 18:30)
 - Ye also have a ___ in heaven. (Col. 4:1)
 - ___ is the way. (Matt. 7:13)

- One little ___ lamb. (2 Sam. 12:3)
- To remove the contents.
- ___ with that holy Spirit of promise. (Eph. 1:13)
- Doctor of Pedagogy. (abbr.)
- Sharp ___ of the mighty. (Ps. 120:4)
- I have heard a ___ from the Lord. (Jer. 49:14)
- Registered Nurse (abbr.)
- All eat the same spiritual ___. (1 Cor. 10:3)
- Seven days under the ___. (Lev. 22:27)
- Airport code for Peoria, Illinois.
- Female deer.
- Now it came ___ pass. (Ruth 1:1)



RESOURCES:

Your Guide to Today's New Music and Literature



Sound Bites By Rick Sharp

KARYN WILLIAMS

Only You

Inpop Records

After an independently produced first project caught the attention of Inpop Records, artist and songwriter Karyn Williams has released her debut full release, "Only You."

A strong first record, full of infectious pop sounds, excellent production values and musician-



ship, inspiring Christ-centered lyrics, and anchored by Williams' strong yet vulnerable vocals, this should be just the first of many good records from her.

"Rest In the Hope," inspired by Williams' father's battle with cancer and acknowledging God's strength and grace in the middle of tough situations, is the record's lead single. It showcases Williams' considerable songwriting skills as well as her soaring vocal talents. The song's powerful anthem-like musical structure lends weight to the overall impact of the song. This one you'll certainly hear in radio rotation.

That's not to say there aren't other great songs on the album.

"Every Good Thing," "Just May Be" and "Only You" are other outstanding cuts, and nothing on the record will disappoint.

"Only You" is an impressive project, especially as a debut national release. Highly recommended.

MARK ROACH

Beautiful Truth

Independent

Independent artist/songwriter and worship leader Mark Roach has released his first independent EP, "Beautiful Truth." Roach's debut CD "Every Reason Why" came in 2007 on the Myrrh/Word Records label and produced four radio singles, three of which charted in the top ten. He's toured with several Christian music notables and leads worship across the country.



Roach's move to self-produced, self-managed independent production and distribution allows him to get new worship music more easily into the hands of churches across the country and allows greater dedication to his

home church — Morning Star Church, O'Fallon, Mo., — where he's led worship for the last 13 years.

There's good music here. "Transformed" is a guitar-heavy rocker proclaiming our desire to be clay in the hands of the Potter. "Beautiful Truth" celebrates the truths of God's Word and asks Him to continue speaking to us. The record opens with "Glory Hallelujah," an anthemic call to worship that is one of the best songs of the record.

Worship leaders, if you're looking for inspired, easy to use new music for your church, Roach has good stuff for you. If you're a listener/music lover looking for good Christ-centered music, you should give "Beautiful Truth" a listen.

REMEDY DRIVE

Resuscitate

Centricity Music

Remedy Drive, originally a brother's band out of Omaha, Neb., attracted a lot of early national attention: charting a No. 1 radio hit, receiving several Dove Award nominations and touring with the likes of David Crowder Band and MercyMe. That all seemed to fall apart when three of them decided life on the road was more than they could balance with

family and life requirements. They encouraged remaining brother and frontman David Zach to keep going.

Enter three diverse new members, a new extended play recording issued in 2011 that contained



"some of the band's best songs to date," according to JesusFreakHideout.com, and a new record deal with Centricity Music, and Rem-

edy Drive is again off to the races.

The new project is a mix of pop and hard rock, covering roaring guitar grunge to melodic keys and touching almost everything in between. Excellent musicianship shines through the entire record. Take a look at their online video "Resuscitate Me" and get a feel for the kind of stage energy these guys generate. Amazing.

This new project is beautifully layered, well recorded and full of relevant lyrics and moving songs. We should expect to see a lot more from these guys.

Christian Marketplace Top Ten Best Sellers

Fiction

1. *The Harbinger*, Jonathan Cahn (Charisma)
2. *Coming Home*, Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan)
3. *The Struggle*, Kentucky Brothers Series #3, Wanda E. Brunstetter (Barbour)
4. *The Bridesmaid*, Home to Hickory Series #2, Beverly Lewis (Baker)
5. *The Fiddler*, Home to Hickory Hollow Series #1, Beverly Lewis (Baker)
6. *Lethal Legacy*, Guardians of Justice Series #3, Irene Hannon (Baker)
7. *Accused*, Pacific Coast Justice Series #1, Janice Cantore (Tyndale)
8. *Not in the Heart*, Chris Fabry (Tyndale)
9. *Whispers in the Wind*, Wild West Wind Series #2, Lauraine Snelling (Baker)
10. *Redeeming Love*, Francine Rivers (Waterbrook/Multnomah)

Nonfiction

1. *KJV Standard Lesson Commentary 2012–2013*, Standard Publishing Staff (Standard)
2. *Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
3. *KJV Standard Lesson Commentary Large Print Edition 2012–2013*, Standard Publishing Staff (Standard)
4. *Unglued*, Lysa TerKeurst (Zondervan)
5. *Jesus Calling, Large Print Deluxe Edition*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
6. *Jesus Calling, Deluxe Edition*, Sarah Young (Thomas Nelson)
7. *Heaven Is for Real*, Todd Burpo (Thomas Nelson)
8. *Not a Fan*, Kyle Idleman (Zondervan)
9. *NIV Standard Lesson Commentary 2012–2013*, Standard Publishing Staff (Standard)
10. *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan (David C Cook)

Book Reviews By Martine Bates Sharp, Ed.D.

Pastor's Handbook

John Bisagno. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing, 2011. 469 pp. (Hardcover).

John Bisagno has spent 60 years in the ministry, serving 30 of those years as pastor of the 25,000-member First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, where he is now pastor emeritus. He also has written 30 books and currently serves as adjunct faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I don't usually begin a book review with the author's credentials, but in this case it seems appropriate. Before my pastor (or my son, also a pastor) takes anyone's advice, I want him to know the advice-giver knows what he is talking about.

I believe Bisagno knows exactly what he is talking about.

The book is surprisingly easy to read, written in a conversational style with short chapters that cover everything from God's vision for a church to taking positions on current issues and many topics in between. The book is full of practi-

cal advice produced from wisdom gained in experience and supported by meticulous attention to Scripture. What a great gift for a pastor (or a son, if he happens to be a pastor).

This handbook is a revision of his earlier work, first published a decade ago and now used in all Southern Baptist seminaries.

The Gaither Homecoming Bible

Bill and Gloria Gaither, Editors. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2012. 1,696 pp. (Leather cover).

Bill and Gloria Gaither just never stop coming up with great ideas. First a number of award-winning songs, then the popular "Homecoming" video series and now a devotional Bible. The Bible text is in the New King James Version, and what makes it a Gaither Homecoming Bible are the songs, poems and stories scattered throughout the biblical text.

As might be expected from any-

thing produced by the Gaithers, the emphasis is on music, with 75 articles taking a deeper look at "some of the most beloved hymns and gospel songs." The songs highlighted include many written by the Gaithers; one example is a song written as the pair was coming out of a hard time in their lives. In the narrative accompanying the lyrics to the song, Gloria tells of some difficulties faced by the couple. As she was lying on the sofa contemplating the birth of their third child, the Lord spoke to her, giving her reassurance of His presence. The result was "Because He Lives," a song that has brought hope to many in the four decades since it was written.

Besides the articles about well-loved songs, there are several original poems (it should be no surprise that talented songwriters would also be poets) and 230 devotionals written by Bill and Gloria Gaither and 60 of the artists from the "Homecoming" series. I cannot imagine a Gaither fan who wouldn't love this Bible.



BP photo

“[God] saved me. I was 16 and He took away most of my vices instantly. Like the major hang-ups in my life, I completely lost the desire for them.”

Flame

‘Jesus, crazy’

Seminary study strengthens hip-hop artist Flame’s music

A Grammy, four-time Dove Award and two-time Stellar Award nominee, hip-hop artist Flame credits his time at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., with strengthening the theology in his chart-topping songs.

Flame — whose actual name is Marcus Gray — was introduced to Southern Seminary by happenstance when he and a friend took a road trip from St. Louis for a conference at the seminary. That visit is where Flame met R. Albert Mohler Jr., Southern’s president, who made quite an impression on him.

“We really enjoyed the preliminary session and the breakout sessions, and Dr. Mohler just meshed well with the prospective students, the conference attendees,” Flame said.

Flame’s wife landed an internship in Louisville during a time when he was trying to further his education. Because his visit to Southern left such an impression, his wife looked online and suggested Southern’s undergraduate program at Boyce College. So Flame transferred from Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis and moved with his wife to Louisville.

Since graduating from Boyce, Flame has continued his studies at Southern in biblical counseling. But he has been doing much more than just hitting the books.

Earlier this year Flame released his sixth rap album, aptly named “The 6th.” In it he uses rap music, which usually is associated with sex, gangs and violence, to teach others about the gospel.

“It’s my sixth album but it’s also a deeper meaning,” he said. “Obviously God created both male and female on the sixth day. ... I wanted to talk about us. It’s really an album focused on anthropology, the study of man, and thinking about our strengths, our weaknesses, our personalities, our flaws, our accomplishments, and ultimately pointing toward God’s original purpose for us.”

“The 6th” debuted at No. 1 on Billboard’s Gospel albums chart in March, claimed the No. 2 spot on the Christian albums chart and was No. 8 on the Rap albums chart. It immediately shot to No. 1 on iTunes’ Hip-Hop chart.

Flame said his purpose for rapping also was something that drew him to Southern: showing the relevance of the Bible.

Although he had been using music to spread the

gospel in prisons, juvenile detention centers and the streets of St. Louis before attending Boyce and seminary, Flame said his mentors in Louisville helped him better communicate the Word in his music.

Flame acknowledged that rap music is not traditionally known for being Christian, but he said that because hip-hop has roots in the Islamic faith some of his listeners are more open to listen about religion in general. Even so, apathy and a lack of commitment to any religion are obstacles he faces when trying to reach out to fans of rap.

The story of Jesus Christ

Flame continues to try to break down barriers with his music, gain listeners’ respect and, most importantly, share with them the story of Jesus Christ.

Flame’s music did not always proclaim the gospel. As a teenager his material consisted of benign topics — staying in school, hanging out with friends. But then he began to run with an older, tougher crowd.

“I was torn between trying to fit in, trying to be normal and do what was regular in my neighborhood and then at the same time having the conscience that said, ‘Hey, this is wrong. You shouldn’t do this. You shouldn’t taste this. You shouldn’t say this, shouldn’t feel this.’ But then I resisted God’s will,” Flame said.

He even had to change schools at 16. On the way home from his orientation a terrible car accident involving an 18-wheeler and more than 10 cars changed his life. Shortly after the accident he asked his grandmother why this had happened, and she told him God was trying to get his attention. Just a few weeks later, she died and Flame was devastated.

After about a month of resistance Flame finally went back to church, where he better understood the gospel message.

“[God] saved me. I was 16 and He took away most of my vices instantly. Like the major hang-ups in my life, I completely lost the desire for them, and I just started going Jesus crazy after that.”

Flame’s passion for Jesus has not fizzled since then. He continues to reach out not just in the United States but around the world with his music and with an acting debut this year. Flame was part of the original play “From This Day Forward,” which aired in May on GMC (formerly the Gospel Music Channel). (BP)

World of Religion

Compiled from Wire Services

Beeson’s George represents BWA at Catholic synod

ROME — Timothy George, dean and professor of divinity, history and doctrine at Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, is representing the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in Rome at the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church.

Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council revolutionized life inside the Roman Catholic Church, hundreds of bishops from around the world are gathered in Rome to confront an external threat: a mounting tide of secularization.

The synod of bishops brings together 262 top church leaders, lay experts and representatives of other Christian groups for a three-week summit at the Vatican.

George accepted the invitation of BWA General Secretary Neville Callam to attend the Vatican meetings, which began Oct. 7 and run through Oct. 18. The theme, “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith,” will be guided by a working document that was issued June 19.

George expressed his support for the synod’s theme. “In a world where the Christian faith is increasingly under assault, this theme is of urgent concern for all believers in Jesus Christ,” he said. George also noted that Oct. 11 marked the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, “an event of great historic importance for Christian unity.”

Topics to be discussed include a rediscovery of the heart of evangelization, discerning the changes that affect how Christianity is lived out by faith communities, the transmission of the Christian faith and pastoral activity.

George is attending as a fraternal delegate for BWA and is expected to “take an active part in the proceedings,” according to the invitation letter received by the BWA from Nikola Eterovic, titular archbishop of Cibale and general secretary of the synod of bishops.

George serves as chair of the BWA commission on doctrine and Christian unity and a member of the BWA division of missions, evangelism and theological reflection.

Baptists help Syrians displaced by civil war

WASHINGTON — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) is leading a response to assist Syrians displaced by the civil war in the Middle Eastern country. The BWA has sent an initial grant of \$15,000 for the relief effort.

Since the outbreak of violence in Syria in March 2011, the humanitarian situation has continuously deteriorated. As the crisis escalates, displacement continues across Syria. According to the United Nations 2.5 million people are in need of assistance, with 1.2 million people internally displaced throughout the country.

The key problem is access to food. The BWA is working with its partners in the Middle East and within Syria itself to meet the urgent need. The aim is to enable local Baptists to respond to the immediate food needs of the internally displaced and others affected by the violence in their wider area.

The Baptist Convention of Syria, a BWA member organization, has approximately 600 members in 10 churches.

Want to see your news in The Alabama Baptist?

Email your information to news@thealabamabaptist.org; fax it to 205-870-8957 or call 1-800-803-5201, Ext. 112. Church announcements should arrive three weeks prior to the event.

